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## *School & Community Drug Talks*

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### **Statistics on young people and alcohol, tobacco and ille- gal drugs**

#### **Rates of Drug Use**

Among 12 to 17 year olds in the United States (SAMHSA, 2004):

- 34.5% have used tobacco in their lifetime, 14.4% in the past month.
- 42.9% have used alcohol in their lifetime, 17.7% in the past month.
- 30.5% have used an “illicit” drug in their lifetime, 11.2% in the past month.

Among 12th graders in the United States (Johnston, 2004):

- 54% have tried cigarettes in their lifetime, 24% current smokers.
- 77% have consumed alcohol, 48% in the past month.

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- 51% have tried an illicit drug in their lifetime.

Findings and recommendations for more effective drug education (Skager, 2004):

- Drug Use remains common among high-school students.
- 77% have consumed alcohol, 48% in the past month.
- Abstinence for all is unrealistic. – give safety information.

### Perceived availability of drugs

Among 12 to 17 year olds in the United States (Johnston, 2004):

- 87.1% say that marijuana is fairly/very easy to get.
- 94.2% say alcohol is fairly/very easy to get.
- 43.4% say cocaine is fairly/very easy to get.

### Problems associated with alcohol and tobacco

- Approximately 22.5 percent of adults were current smokers in 2002 (CDC, 2004).

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- Cigarette smoking is the most preventable cause of disease and death in the United States. Every year, more than 400,000 die from cigarette smoking, 20% of deaths in the US are related to smoking.
- The most commonly abused drug, and the one that the largest number of people are addicted to, is alcohol.
- In 2003, approximately 55% of U.S adults reported drinking at least one drink in the past month (SAMHSA, 2004).
- In any one year nearly 4.5% of people in the US, could be given a diagnosis of alcoholism, compared to 1.8% for other drug dependence. Alcohol use is a leading risk factor in the three leading causes of death among youth: unintentional injuries, suicides and homicides.
- Binge drinking is associated with a number of adverse health effects, including unintentional injuries (e.g., motor vehicle crashes, falls, burns, drowning, and hypothermia); violence (homicide, suicide, child abuse, domestic violence); sudden infant death syndrome; alcohol poisoning; hypertension; myocardial infarc-

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tion; gastritis; pancreatitis; sexually transmitted diseases; meningitis; and poor control of diabetes (CDC, 2004).

- 85,000 deaths (3.5% of all deaths) were directly and indirectly caused by alcohol consumption, in 2000 (Mokdad, 2004).

### Problems associated with illegal drugs

- 17,000 deaths (0.71% of all deaths) were directly and indirectly caused by illicit drug use, in 2000.

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